287 Foot (*Pes*)

Augustine says, *Super Psalmis*,[[1]](#endnote-1) my foot is my love. I go wherever I go. Wherefore the Lord said, Deut. 11[:24]: “Every place, that your foot shall tread upon, shall be yours.” Because according to his foot the man of his inclination will go to one place or to another. Wherefore says Eccle. 4[:17]: “Keep your foot, when you go into the house of God,” as if saying, whoever wants to enter the house of God, let him guard his affections. For in a narrow way and slippery, it is necessary for man to watch his feet. Such is the power in the house of the Lord. Whether however 1 Kings [2:9] is it said of God, “He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness.” And here the Lord is threatened by the wicked, Deut. 32[:35]: “Revenge is mine, and I will repay them in due time, that their foot may slide,” namely, from the way of charity. Therefore, Christ said in Mark 9[:44]: “And if your foot scandalizes you, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter lame into life everlasting, than having two feet, to be cast into the hell of fire.” Just as a bird catcher places a noose especially for other members, so the devil especially settles upon the affections of man.

¶ About which it is lamented, Psal. [56:7]: “They prepared a snare for my feet.” Ambrose in his *Hexameron*, c. the last,[[2]](#endnote-2) says, Therefore God gave two feet to man along with the birds, and not four feet as the beasts. Because of this it is said in Psal. [102:5]: “Your youth shall be renewed like the eagle's.” Note here that birds which rarely descend to the earth hardly have feet for snaring, so it is for those who raise their affections to pride in the Psal. [65:6]: “In the river they shall pass on foot.” But concerning evils it is said in Judith 9[:8]: “The deep held their feet, and the waters overwhelmed them.” But as the naturalists say, the feet of camels because they are fleshy need frequent washing, so our affections because they are very fleshy frequently need to be washed. In the sign of which Christ washed the feet of his disciples, namely, John 13[:5]. Abraham also said to his guests, Gen. 18[:4]: “Wash your feet, and rest.” Man having dirty feet does not rest well until they are cleaned, so it is concerning dirty affections.

Again, according the Chrysostom,[[3]](#endnote-3) for example, the foot of the camel since it is soft, conforms to the earth, and easily grasps it. So, a soft conversation is easily inclined to earthly things. Wherefore also Moses wishing to approach to the Lord was told, “Put off the shoes from your feet,” [Exod.] 3[:5]. For he had lately come out of Egypt who had killed an Egyptian.

¶ He had also taken a wife from the Madian land in which he had contracted the dirt of sins, because of which he ought not approach the Lord until he had purged himself by penitence of the feet, as Jerome seems to say, *Epistola* 14.[[4]](#endnote-4)

Again, Augustine, *Super Psalmum* 33,[[5]](#endnote-5) says, do not be limping, but have two feet. They are the ones who have the two precepts of charity. The lame ought not enter the house of the Lord, Lev. 21[:18]. So, he who lacks in love, it is said, 3 Kings 18[:21]: “How long do you halt between two sides?” So, they do who are lacking in both loves.

1. Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* 13.9.10 (PL 32:849): Pondus meum amor meus; eo feror quocumque feror.

   Cf. John Bromyard, *Summa praedicantium omni eruditione refertissima, explicans praecipuos* (Venetiis: Apud Dominicum Nicolinum, 1586), p. 311: de loco suo, dum alius circumducitur, moueatur, circulus feu, linea illa incepta non perficitur, ita si pes amoris de quo Augustinus, Pes meus amore meus immobiliter.... [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Ambrose, *Hexameron* 6.9.74 (PL 14:272): Recte autem non plures, sed duo sunt homini pedes; quaterni enim pedes feris ac belluis sunt, bini avibus. Et ideo unus quasi de volatilibus est homo, qui alta visu petat, et quodam [Col.0272B] remigio volitet sublimium sagacitate sensuum. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* Homilia 32 ex cap. 19 (PL 56:811-812): Et sicut cameli pes ambulantis non dissipate terram, sed cum sit mollis, concordat ei, et complectitur eam: sic et conversation Gentium, quamvis non esset bona, non erat dissipans terram, hoc est, carnalem naturam sed conveniens erat naturae carnali, et secundum voluntatem ipsius erat. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Jerome, *Liber actuum apostolorum* 7 (PL 29:696): Fugit autem Moyses in verbo isto: et factus est advena in terra Madian, ubi generavit filios duos. Et expletis annis quadraginta, apparuit illi in deserto montis Sina angelus in igne flammae rubi. Moyses autem videns, admiratus est visum. Et accedente illo, ut consideraret, facta est ad eum vox Domini, dicens: Ego sum Deus patrum tuorum, Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, et Deus Jacob. Tremefactus [Col.0696C] autem Moyses, non audebat considerare. Dixit autem illi Dominus: Solve calceamentum pedum tuorum: locus enim in quo stas, terra sancta est. Videns vidi afflictionem populi mei, qui est in Aegypto, et gemitum eorum audivi, et descendi liberare eos. Et nunc veni, et mittam te in Aegyptum. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 33.2.10 (PL 36:313): Duos pedes habeto, noli esse claudus. Qui sunt duo pedes? Duo praecepta dilectionis, Dei et proximi. Istis pedibus curre ad Deum, accede ad illum: [Col.0314] quia et ut curreres ipse hortatus est, et ipse suum lumen aspersit sic, ut magnifice et divine se sequi possitis. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)